

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 2691

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL PUTS PARTY STATUS IN DOUBT

1. THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL ANNOUNCED APRIL 20 THAT THREE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS SEEKING PARTY STATUS HAVE FAILED TO COMPLY FULLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES LAW. ACCORDING TO THE TRIBUNAL'S REPORT, THE INSCRIPTION DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY THE RADICAL ALFARIST FRONT (FRA), POPULAR DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MPD) AND POPULAR DEMOCRACY (DP) CONTAINED IRREGULARITIES THAT MUST BE CORRECTED BY MAY 16 IF THESE GROUPS ARE TO BE ACCORDED LEGAL PARTY STATUS. OF THE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS NOT PREVIOUSLY REGOGNIZED AS PARTIES, ONLY THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT (ID) PASSED MUSTER AND ACQUIRED PARTY STATUS AT THIS STAGE OF THE TRIBUNAL'S DELIBERATIONS. IN MAKING THE DETERMINATION, THE TRIBUNAL, IN EFFECT, GAVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY OF RODRIGO BORJA OF ID WHILE PUTTING ON AMBER THE PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS OF ABDON CALDERON OF FRA AND CAMILO MENA OF THE PEKING-LINE COMMUNIST MPD, AND THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS OF DP'S OSVALDO HURTADO, WHO IS RUNNING IN TANDEM WITH JAIME ROLDOS OF THE CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES.

2. AFTER REVIEWING THE DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AND CHECKING BY COMPUTER THE AFFILIATIONS LISTS, THE TRIBUNAL
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FOUND IRREGULARITIES IN THE APPLICATIONS OF ALL THREE GROUPS AND THAT THE MPD AND DP HAD FAILED TO MEET LEGITIMATELY THE 27,000 MINIMUM OF AFFILIATES ESTABLISHED BY THE LAW.

3. AS COULD BE EXPECTED, THE TRIBUNAL'S ANNOUNCEMENT HAS UNLEASHED SQUEALS OF PROTEST FROM THE AFFECTED GROUPS.

CALDERON CLAIMED TO SEE THE HAND OF THE DICTATORSHIP IN THE TRIBUNAL'S ACTION AND DEFENDED THE FRA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES LAW. HURTADO HAS COUNTERED THAT THE TRIBUNAL'S GROUNDS ARE INCORRECT BUT ADMITTED THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF ERRORS ON THE AFFILIATION LISTS EXISTS. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE MPD ACCUSED THE TRIBUNAL OF ARBITRARINESS AND OF ELIMINATING A RESPECTABLE SECTOR OF THE POPULACE FROM THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

4. THERE ARE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE TRIBUNAL ITSELF ON THE QUESTION OF DISQUALIFICATION. BENJAMIN CARRION, THE TRIBUNAL'S PRESIDENT, ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY HIS OPPOSITION TO THE TRIBUNAL'S REPORT AND HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN IF THE DISQUALIFICATION OF THE THREE GROUPS IS CONFIRMED. HE ARGUED THAT CONSIDERATIONS OF PUBLIC ORDER MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER PURELY LEGAL ONES, AND THAT NUMERICAL QUANTITIES BE GIVEN LESS EMPHASIS. IN RESPONSE, TRIBUNAL VICE PRESIDENT JOSE BAQUERO DE LA CALLE SAID THE TRIBUNAL WAS ONLY FULFILLING ITS OBLIGATION UNDER THE LAW, WITH WHICH CARRION WAS FAMILIAR BEFORE ACCEPTING HIS APPOINTMENT.

5. COMMENT: THE DECISION OF THE TRIBUNAL APPEARS TO BE TECHNICALLY CENTERED ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW, BUT CARRION'S STATEMENT CREATES DOUBTS ABOUT THE TRUE
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MOTIVATION BEHIND THE DECISION. SINCE THE DP IS ONLY ABOUT 1000 SIGNATURES AWAY FROM QUALIFYING IT SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE. HOWEVER, FRA AND THE MPD MAY HAVE A MORE DIFFICULT TIME.
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